Dr. YONGE's

SERMON

Preached before the HONOURABLE

HOUSE of COMMONS.

Lunæ, 2° *die Februarii*, 1750.

Ordered,

THAT the Thanks of this Houſe be given to the Reverend Dr. *Philip Yonge*, for the Sermon by him preached upon *Friday* laſt before this Houſe at St. *Margaret*'s, *Weſtminſter*; and that he be deſired to print the ſame; and that the Lord *Dupplin*, Mr. *George Onſlow*, and Mr. *Thomas Townſhend*, do acquaint him therewith.

J. DYSON,
Cl. Dom. Com.

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A

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

HOUSE of COMMONS,

AT

St. Margaret's, Westminster,

On *Friday, January* 30, 1756;

Being appointed to be obſerved as the Day of the *Martyrdom* of King CHARLES I.

By *PHILIP YONGE*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to his MAJESTY.

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MDCCLVI.

fellow-citizen, ſubject to the ſame laws, and partaking of the common intereſt of all, we ſhall find that whatſoever he doeth, even with the moſt contracted deſign, and with the moſt near regard to his own concerns, will have ſome influence, ſome ſmall degree of influence at leaſt, over the public intereſt and the peace of other men.

Common and daily obſervation do nevertheleſs furniſh us with many inſtances of the breach of this duty, where it certainly is very clear and diſtinct; ſuch inſtances as indeed are not applicable to every perſon, every circumſtance, and every period of time relative to the ſad event which we are called together to commemorate; yet ſuch as we ought at all times carefully to avoid, in order to the diſpoſing of our minds to a *general habit of peace*, and the preparing them for the obſervance of that more extenſive part of our duty, which is of an higher and more important nature, and upon which the health and proſperity of ſtates do confeſſedly depend, I mean ſubmiſſion and obedience to lawful authority, and the not raſhly intermeddling in thoſe great and weighty matters of Government to which we are not duly called.

And as theſe conſiderations will of courſe lead us into reflections upon thoſe fatal times which we now deplore, ſo will it be proper to conclude with pointing out thoſe uſes which ought to be made of theſe ſolemn commemorations of paſt events.

Is there then any thing in the knowledge of which we are, from our natural inability, from our want of a ſuitable edu-

cation, or from any other circumſtance whatſoever, inferior to others? Doubtleſs this is, and muſt be, the caſe of every man: and ſurely the not acknowledging this ſecretly, and within our own breaſts, is a fooliſh and weak pride; the outward affectation of an equality in ſuch matters, even againſt our own conſciouſneſs, is great arrogance; and the further pretence of dictating to others muſt be attended, even in ſmall concerns, with very bad conſequences, in great concerns with the very worſt.

The deſigns and private purſuits of men, how lawful, how juſt, how honourable ſoever they may be, are uſually carried on with ſome kind of reſerve, caution, and a proper degree of ſecrecy: and it is certainly acting out of our ſphere, and is far from ſtudying to be quiet, when we uſe fraud or force, exert our art or our power, to ſtrip off that veil of prudence which they have a right to wear.

And if this be injurious, how much more ſo is it to ſuppoſe that we know the ſecrets of mens hearts without the trouble, perhaps without the poſſibility of an enquiry? to take it for granted that their thoughts are evil when we are utterly ignorant of them, and through ſuch ill-grounded jealouſies to force ourſelves into matters in which we have no proper concern?

From this again we are led of courſe to invert all order, and rank, and relation; to preſs into buſineſs foreign to our profeſſions; to reprove thoſe to whoſe ſtations, or years, or judgments, we ought reaſonably

to

to ſubmit; to uſurp powers of various kinds, juſt as blind chance ſhall throw them in our way, and wherewith the leaſt reflection might ſatisfy us that we have nothing to do.

Of theſe failings perſons of all ranks are but too apt to be guilty. And in the laſt century had not many affected more wiſdom than they poſſeſſed, had not many been jealous and ſuſpicious beyond reaſon, had not many been of ſo turbulent and unquiet a ſpirit as not to be ſatisfied even with the moſt ample conceſſions, at length had not every man thought himſelf fit for every thing, it had been morally impoſſible, notwithſtanding the very great and ſubſtantial cauſes of complaint againſt perſons in authority, for the public to have been worked up to ſuch a height of fury, and to have involved itſelf in diſtreſſes ſo calamitous and deplorable. So true it is, that the happineſs of a people, as collected into a community, depends in great meaſure upon the behaviour of every individual; and that matters, which to ſome appear remote or trifling, of mere private concern, and of ſmall extent, have yet an amazing ſhare in the eſtabliſhing or overturning of ſtates, as *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and a little ſpark kindleth a great fire.*

But the health and proſperity of kingdoms do confeſſedly depend, in ſtill more ample meaſure, upon the quietneſs of mens ſpirits in matters of a more high and important nature, and where the connexion between the

the conduct of particulars and the preſervation of the general welfare is more eaſily to be diſcerned.

There are two things in this world which to good and wiſe men are more valuable then all elſe which the world can beſtow: I mean a free exerciſe of a man's own religion, the tenets of which are ſuppoſed not contrary to the ſafety and authority of civil power; and the free ordering a man's own actions, under no other reſtraint than what is impoſed upon them by a Government founded in and adminiſtered by law. This is what I underſtand to be meant by civil and religious liberty; and ſurely civil and religious liberty cannot ſtand in need of any further deſcription, ſince every ſubject, in theſe kingdoms, may eaſily ſatisfy himſelf what they are, as they are what every ſubject here feels himſelf poſſeſſed of in the fulleſt manner. Now if the wiſe and conſiderate do juſtly prefer theſe birthrights of chriſtians and men to all the pomp, and ſplendor, and riches, which unlimited power can beſtow upon its favourites, it will ſcarce be matter of ſurprize that the warm and active, equally ſenſible of the bleſſing, ſhould be ſometimes fired with jealouſy for the loſs of it, and zeal for its preſervation, even when the danger may be but imaginary, always when it is real. Here then we are to *ſtudy to be quiet*. This excellent rule we break when we ſuffer ourſelves to be too ſoon tranſported; or, being juſtly tranſported, if we do not reſume our calmneſs, when every thing, of which we had a right to complain, is redreſſed and ſet in order. We break this rule indeed

1 Theſ. iv. 11.

——*that ye ſtudy to be quiet, and to do your own buſineſs.*

THESE words, connected with part of the preceding verſe, *we beſeech you brethren*, contain an exhortation to two ſocial duties, in great meaſure depending upon each other, Quietneſs with regard to our neighbour, and Diligence with regard to ourſelves.

The Quiet here recommended is that kind of Quiet which is oppoſite to the turbulency of an unruly and over-buſy diſpoſition. The mind of man is always active, and often improperly ſo; conſequently it requires ſome attention to what paſſes within us, ſome pains and labour to keep our views right, and to direct our aims and endeavours to their proper end. *Study*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to be quiet*, and to do your own buſineſs. And doubtleſs this precept well conſidered and well obſerved would be of the greateſt importance to public and private happineſs. All that induſtry which he who minds his own buſineſs will uſe in proſecuting his private and lawful purſuits, all the corporal labour of the artificer, all the mental

labour of the learned, will have but little tendency even to their own good if they be of a reſtleſs and contentious mind: and if that induſtry ſhould be perverted from its true end, and uſed in intermeddling with matters foreign to their duty, their underſtanding and their intereſt, the peace of all with whom they can have any concern muſt be diſturbed, in proportion to the power and intemperance of ſuch ſpirits.

Obvious and uncontroverted as theſe plain truths are, it is yet perhaps not very eaſy to mark out the true and exact boundaries, within which it is our duty to be active, and beyond which we have nothing to do, eſpecially in ſuch caſes as may be of the higheſt importance to us. All men (for inſtance) are free by nature. The inhabitants of this happy realm are ſo by law; and to endeavour after a continuance of ſo ineſtimable a bleſſing will at all times be thought by every man to be his own *Buſineſs*: but even here his activity muſt ſurely be reſtrained within the ſphere of legal Duty, and by a due attention to the general welfare; for man is by nature ſo ſocial that even his moſt private concerns have ſome connexion with the intereſts of others. *None of us liveth unto himſelf. We live* indeed *and we dye unto the Lord:* but we live likewiſe unto one another. Every man is a parent, or ſon, or brother, or huſband, or friend; and the influence of his endeavours *to do his own buſineſs* muſt in ſome meaſure extend to ſuch as bear relation to him. And if we conſider him in a more extenſive view as a fellow-

indeed when we make our *liberty a cloak for maliciouſneſs*; when we cover the turbulency of an unquiet ſpirit with a pretended zeal for the honour of God and the good of mankind, and even under that pretence change religion for hypocriſy and government for confuſion.

And had not the breaking of this rule formerly a very great ſhare in bringing upon this nation the inexpreſſible diſtreſſes under which it laboured ſorely? What but the graſping at every branch of power civil and religious by ſome men who had no ſound pretenſions to it, hurried in the end both themſelves and others (who at firſt thought of nothing leſs) into meaſures againſt their king, and againſt the whole of our conſtitution, which no ſteady and rational principles can juſtify, which every friend to good order muſt condemn, and which nothing but the irreſiſtible forces of Ambition and Enthuſiaſm when united could ſupport? Yet I ſpeak not of ſuch motives as in the beginning of thoſe unhappy times prompted men to a free, and legal, and parliamentary oppoſition to illegal acts. Their conduct was ſurely laudable, and will abide the ſevereſt ſcrutiny. *Great-Britain* will pray that its repreſentatives may never be without ſuch a ſpirit, altho' it hath full truſt and confidence in its Sovereign and his royal houſe that there never will be occaſion to exert it. But I ſpeak of the later meaſures, purſued after every complaint had been heard, and every grievance redreſſed; of thoſe meaſures eſpecially, purſued after one of the moſt violent enemies to the

royal

royal prerogative had acknowledged in parliament, that * " if they would not then reſt ſatisfied, and thankfully " contented, with all thoſe large and extraordinary con- " ceſſions of the King, and bleſs God for that tender of " them to their hands, the preſent and all future ages " would chronicle them for the moſt unreaſonable and " ungrateful creatures that ever ſat within thoſe walls, " or the world produced ſince the Creation." — Of thoſe meaſures which were carried on by the moſt illegal and arbitrary acts; and concluded by the uſurpation of a ſingle perſon, to the ſecurity of whoſe greatneſs the murther of a King was thought neceſſary. A murther too, attended with the ſhedding of much other noble blood; contrived with the deepeſt diſſimulation and hypocriſy; executed by a ſmall band of unknown and lawleſs men; and followed by a tyranny, which was for a ſeaſon maintained by the amazing ſkill and boldneſs of one very great and very bad man; but under which God Almighty in his mercy did not ſuffer this land long to groan. The eyes of a people, who had been cheated out of that liberty for which they once thought they had been fighting, were at length opened; and a way was found for the reſtoration of the royal race, who might have reigned happily over a willing people, had not bigotry been too ſtrong for ſenſe, and a vicious education effaced all notions of the neceſſity of ruling by law. So that the ſecond of the unfortunate monarch's ſons was eaſily

* W. Prynne's ſpeech.—Parl. hiſt. vol. 18. p. 345.

eaſily prevailed upon to attempt that tyranny over mens minds as well as bodies which a free nation will never bear, and which our fathers thought it their *buſineſs* to ſhake off. They did ſhake it off accordingly; and we, their ſons, do annually thank Almighty God for our deliverance from it, with a ſolemnity, not of the ſame kind, but equal to the preſent.

If now we look back with impartiality upon thoſe tranſactions which ended in the death of the King, and the diſſolving of the whole of our Conſtitution, we ſhall ſee indeed a monarch too impatient of advice, who had early imbibed high notions of government, in which he was confirmed by a ſtrong and fatal reſolution to pleaſe his Queen; by the arbitrary diſpoſitions of his favourite Counſellors; and, above all, by the ſervility of his Judges. But we ſhall ſee too every grievance redreſſed ſooner or later; ſome with difficulty, others more eaſily; ſome things granted without that good grace which reaſon and ſound policy required, and others again in a latitude beyond the bounds of either, and perhaps beyond even the expectation of thoſe who demanded them. Yet nothing could produce that mutual confidence between the king and his ſubjects which was eſſential to the well being of the nation. Many wiſe and good patriots, early ſatisfied with their Sovereign's actions, would not ſuffer themſelves to penetrate the very inmoſt receſſes of his heart, and ſuſpect his ſincerity, for which, if the honour of Majeſty were not a ſufficient pledge, they had yet this

further ſecurity, that after perpetuating the parliament it was next to impoſſible to reverſe what ever had been conſented to by the Crown. Others were not content with avoiding the ſhackles which they imagined were prepared for them, without beating them out into ſwords and ſpears. And of theſe ſome are ſuppoſed to have conceived hopes even from the beginning that their animoſities would end much as they did. Hence was the afflicted land overwhelmed with civil broils; the blood of the beſt families ſhed in abundance; till at length the ſmall remains of that venerable body the Houſe of Commons, over-awed by an army, acquieſced in the violent excluſion of their own Members from their councils, put their King to an ignominious death, deprived the Lords of their hereditary honours, and then ſuffered themſelves to be diſſolved, even with bitter reproaches, by that very man whoſe way they had been preparing to a more abſolute tyranny than they had even feared before.

Conſider now from what a ſtate the people of this land fell. They fell † "from the greateſt calm, and "the fulleſt meaſure of felicity, that any people in any "age, for ſo long a time together had been bleſſed "with, to the wonder and envy of all the other "parts of Chriſtendom." Conſider likewiſe into what they fell. They fell into the greateſt ſtorm of civil diſtractions, into all that confuſion which enthuſiaſm in its various ſhapes could bring upon Religion, and all that horror

† Clar. Hiſt. B. I.

horror which military power could bring upon Government. Nor can it be ſuppoſed that ſerious men, how much ſoever they may admire the importance of which the Uſurper became with regard to other States, can think that circumſtance any great alleviation of mens miſery at home. Indeed as to the miſery of thoſe days it is long ſince over, nor does hiſtory deſcend to ſuch minute conſiderations as the condition of private men. It dwells upon the great turns and events of which the other is the conſequence, and upon which we are very apt in times of tranquillity and eaſe to reflect with too much indifference in that reſpect. If we paid greater attention to the never-failing melancholy conſequences of inteſtine commotions we ſhould fear them more. And as to our importance abroad, it is confeſſedly a circumſtance apt enough to ſtrike and captivate men, as it conveys to them an idea of national glory; but it ſhould likewiſe call to their minds a ſad and certain truth, that a private man had at that time the lives and fortunes of *Engliſhmen* more at his arbitrary command than any lawful prince ever had or can have.

Thus fell the excellent Conſtitution of *England* with its King: concerning whom I ſhall only add the words of him who knew him beſt, ſerved him longeſt, adviſed him with fidelity, adhered to him with conſtancy, and tranſmitted to poſterity a moſt ample account of thoſe times, in a work which will be a perpetual monument of his own great abilities. " * He was (ſays the Lord

* Clar. Hiſt. B. XI.

" *Clarendon*) the worthieſt gentleman, the beſt maſter,
" the beſt friend, the beſt huſband, the beſt father,
" and the beſt Chriſtian, that the age in which he lived
" produced. And if he were not the greateſt king,
" if he were without ſome parts and qualities which
" have made ſome kings great and happy, no other
" prince was ever unhappy who was poſſeſſed of half
" his virtues and endowments, and ſo much without
" any kind of vice."

Theſe reflections lead us now to conſider what good uſes we ought to make of this and the like gatherings together of the people for the commemoration of ſuch great and important events.

And firſt we ſhould begin with this wiſe and good conſideration, that all things whatſoever are in the hands of God. His providence is over all; men and ſtates are at his diſpoſal; *the ſpirit of princes he can cut off, and the remainder of wrath he can reſtrain when he ariſes to judgment.* His *ways* indeed *are paſt finding out*, and when he maketh bare his holy arm, and bringeth great calamities upon any nation, either by the violent jarrings and agitations of the elements of nature, or by the working of human paſſions, we ſhould be extremely cautious in our interpretations of thoſe inſtances of his diſpenſations to men. We are however ſure of this, that when we place ſuch events as are deſtructive to others to the account of his judgments for their ſins, if we then err we err with charity againſt us, and the conſequen-

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ces are pride, and vanity, and inſolence. But when we place ſuch events as are fatal to ourſelves to the ſame account, if we then err we err with piety on our ſide, and the conſequences will be contrition of heart, confeſſion of ſin, and that godly ſorrow which worketh repentance.

Secondly, Let us deſcend into ourſelves. Let us take this opportunity of examining and correcting our own hearts. By reflecting upon what has been the conſequence of inflamed paſſions we may learn our own true intereſt, and ſo avoid contributing to the confuſion and diſtreſs in which we may ever be in danger of being involved. Similar cauſes will produce ſimilar effects; and we can never be reckoned altogether ſafe even from our own miſtaken violence unleſs we ſeriouſly ſet to work to calm our ſpirits, to lay aſide our prejudices, and to bring ourſelves into diſpoſitions of mind, candid, open, and ſincere, as thoſe of our Sovereign, and which it is wonderful that any man can want who lives under the mildeſt and freeſt Government.

Thirdly, We are this day put of courſe upon the moſt ſerious conſideration of the importance of thoſe modes of Government, civil and religious, under which we live, to the happineſs of this nation. Theſe conſtitutions have been formed and have grown up as it were together: they are ſuited and adapted to each other: there is a freedom in both which other nations and other churches envy and admire. Attempts to ſeparate them, or to diſſolve either of them, have

have been always attended with confuſion and diſappointment, ſo well do they fall in with the general diſpoſitions of this people. Superſtition and Enthuſiaſm have been their common enemies. They were of old *lovely* together *in their lives: in their deaths they were not divided:* and together did they revive from that abyſs of anarchy in which they had been buried. Long may they laſt to their mutual ſupport. May the State continue to grant protection to the Church; and may the Church give vigour and firmneſs to the State, by training the people committed to its charge in the true faith and fear of God: for it may be depended upon as a moſt certain truth, that Government without Religion muſt tend to diſſolution, and that he who feareth not God will not honour the King.

Hence we are, in the fourth place, led to reflect, that men are moſt ſtrongly called upon and preſſed to obedience to lawful magiſtracy, not only by the moſt general and obvious, but indeed by the moſt awful motive poſſible, the command of God. Eaſe, convenience, happineſs, are doubtleſs good and rational inducements to loyalty and allegiance; but yet a conſcientious ſenſe of duty, in a religious view, is a better, as it is a more certain motive. What is beſt, what moſt convenient, what moſt ſuitable to my happineſs, my dignity, my fame, are queſtions which a wiſe man upon worldly principles alone cannot always very eaſily anſwer to himſelf, and which affection as often determines as reaſon: but

but what is my duty to a Prince, ſitting upon the throne of his Anceſtors, and ruling according to the laws of God and Man, is a queſtion which admits of no pauſe. St. *Paul* hath determined, that to him we owe obedience * *not only for wrath but for conſcience ſake*; and St. *Peter* hath inſtructed us to † *ſubmit ourſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake.*

Laſtly, The general advantage which we may and ought to make of this day's ſolemnity, in common with that of all other days of faſting and contrition, is the favour and love of God, to be obtained by humbling ourſelves in his ſight, by diligently ſearching into the ſtate of our ſouls, by confeſſing our ſins with ſorrow and ſhame, by relieving the neceſſities of our poorer brethren, by earneſtly endeavouring after and praying for all Chriſtian Graces and virtues, by purifying our hearts rather than being of a ſad countenance, and by making the ſincerity of our devotion appear not ſo much unto men by outward ſhew, as unto the Father which ſeeth in ſecret.

So ſhall we eſcape the Prophet's cenſure—‡ *Behold ye faſt for ſtrife and debate—wilt thou call this a faſt and an acceptable day to the Lord?* So ſhall we obſerve the Prophet's admonition—*Is not this the faſt that I have choſen? to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppreſſed go free?—Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the*

* Rom. xiii. 5. † 1 Pet. ii. 13. ‡ Iſaiah lviii.

the poor that are caſt out to thy houſe? when thou ſeeſt the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyſelf from thine own fleſh? So ſhall we obtain the Prophet's reward—*If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted ſoul, then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs ſhall be as the noon-day; and the Lord ſhall guide thee continually.*

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITANNICVM